



STORMWATER MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STORMWATER AGENCY NOTES 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF LANDMARK ORDINANCE

The Lake County Stormwater Management Commission (SMC) is marking the ten-year anniversary of the Lake County Watershed Development Ordinance with a few statistics and praise for intergovernmental cooperation over the past decade.

SMC and the County Board approved the WDO on October 18, 1992 and at the time was the first of its kind in county history. The WDO set minimum countywide stormwater standards for new development in order to prevent future flooding and ensure damages did not increase.

The standards focus on floodwater, detention, soil erosion and sediment control, stormwater runoff quality, and isolated wetland protection, which are some of the most progressive in the state. Ironically, the WDO was passed at a time when Lake County was ranked ninth as the one of the fastest growing counties in the country.

"Our task was to ensure a balance was achieved between economic interests and the need to reduce flooding and drainage related problems, and to protect valued natural resources in the county.

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To our benefit and success, many entities came together to develop and pass the strongest environmental protection document in the history of the county,” said Steve Mountsier, SMC chairman.

The “many entities” refers to the representatives from municipalities, townships, drainage districts, development and environmental interests, consultants, and federal, state, regional and county agencies that came together over two years to develop and implement the WDO. Many of these same representatives sat on SMC’s first formal committee, the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). In fact, some of the members from the first 1992 TAC still sit on the committee.

The success of the WDO is tied to its relationship with municipalities. SMC set about “certifying” municipalities to administer the ordinance within their own borders. Today, there are 40 Certified Communities administering WDO permitting and standards within their own jurisdictions. The County of Lake is a Certified Community and covers the unincorporated areas of the county; SMC covers the Non-Certified Communities, floodplain alterations, and provides technical assistance and site inspections to the Certified Communities. Today, over 1400 permits and approvals have been reviewed by SMC staff.

“Our goal was not to create another layer of government. The Certified Community program has not only improved our day-to-day working relationship with the municipalities but helps us resolve potential problems in the field quickly and efficiently. The WDO wouldn’t be as effective as it is if it weren’t for the intergovernmental cooperation,” said Ward Miller, SMC executive director.

Some of the highlights of the WDO over the 10 years include:

- **August 1992** – 12 members representing municipal and consultanting engineers, developers, environmental and regulatory agencies, and county representatives made up the first Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).
- **December 1992** – Thirty-two communities were “certified” to administer the WDO within their own jurisdictions. Today, 40 communities including the County of Lake are certified. Recertification is every three years.

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- **October 1992** – What was then known as the Illinois Department of Transportation – Division of Water Resources delegated floodway-permitting authority to SMC. This marked the first time DWR granted permitting authority to a county stormwater agency in the state. This was another step in SMC’s “one stop shopping” permitting program.
- **1998** – SMC, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Natural Resource Conservation Service and the Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District signed the Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Agreement (se/sc) to coordinate WDO permit review for soil erosion and sediment control submitted by a developer as part of a site plan. The agreement also outlined bi-yearly se/sc training.
- **August 2001** – WDO isolated wetland protection language was approved by SMC and the County Board. The wetland protection program is the most progressive of its kind in the state.
- **June 2002** – An Interagency Coordination agreement executed between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, SMC and Lake County Department of Planning, Building and Development to streamline wetland jurisdictional determinations.
- **2002/2003** – TAC is undertaking revisions and updates to the 1992 Technical Reference Manual, which provides technical design options on such stormwater techniques as detention basins and buffers.

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MEMBERS OF THE SMC BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:

Steve Mountsier, County Board Dist. 17 (Chairman)
Tom Adams, Village of Green Oaks
Bonnie Thomson Carter, County Board Dist. 5
Steve Harris, Village of Deerfield
Lane Harrison, Village of Zion
Jim Krischke, Village of Lake Zurich
Martha Marks, County Board Dist. 21
Loretta McCarley, County Board Dist. 2
Tim Perry, Village of Grayslake
Dr. John Schulien, County Board Dist. 13
Tom Skinner, Village of Lake Bluff
Carol Spielman, County Board Dist. 22

AGENCY OVERVIEW

Twelve commissioners – 6 mayors/village presidents and 6 County Board members – govern SMC. A staff of 18 carries out Day to day activities. Key areas of SMC’s countywide program include implementation and monitoring of the Lake County Watershed Development Ordinance, watershed management planning and plan implementation, flood hazard mitigation, natural drainage system maintenance, rain gage network m&o, natural resource protection, and public education and outreach. The agency’s FY’02 operating budget is \$2.3 million and is based on property tax income. Grants are used for projects and project cost-sharing.

OTHER WDO HIGHLIGHTS:

- **September 1992** – After 56 public meetings and many drafts, the Lake County Stormwater Management Commission approved the WDO and its companion document, the Technical Reference Manual. October 1992 – The Lake County Board passed the WDO and TRM to become only the second county in the state to establish countywide stormwater standards.
- **April 1993** – The first Permit Review Fee Schedule was approved by SMC for SMC permit review and inspections in non-certified communities.
- **1993** – SMC reviewed 50 WDO permit applications. In 2002 to date, SMC staff has reviewed over 1400 permits and approvals.
- **1993** – The first soil erosion and sediment control workshop was held for municipal and consultant engineers, developers and site designers, and local government staff.
- **July 1994** – The first WDO revision process focused on administrative efficiency and clarity, and changes to the National Flood Insurance Program.
- **1994** – SMC developed a Countywide General Permit for ease and consistency in county projects by agencies like the Lake County Division of Transportation.
- **1994** – SMC adopted procedures for site inspections and violation remediation.
- **March 1995** – SMC implemented a field inspection program that incorporated routine inspections with Enforcement Officer assistance to remediate potential violations. The majority of site investigations were erosion control related.
- **1995** – The first WDO permit tracking system was implemented.
- **1995** – The first “recertification” of Certified Communities was undertaken. Thirty-six communities were recertified and five communities became certified.
- **1996** – The first environmental inspector and engineering technician were hired.
- **1997** – Assistant Permit Engineer hired.
- **1998** – TAC began public discussion on substantive revisions to the WDO that included soil erosion and sediment control and wetland buffers standards.
- **August 1999** – After 21 months of discussion and over 50 meetings, SMC and the County Board approved the revised WDO. The WDO was made available on SMC’s web site.
- **2000** – An Enforcement Officer Exam was implemented to ensure EO’s were knowledgeable of the new WDO standards adopted in 1999.
- **2001** – The first wetland specialist was hired.
- **March 2001** – TAC and SMC began discussing additional WDO language to protect over 3800 isolated wetlands, comprising of 6817 acres.
- **April 2002** – A 52-question, Certified Wetland Specialist (CWS) Exam was offered for those performing wetland delineations and preparing WDO applications for proposed wetland impacts in the county. Today, there are 53 CWS.

CURRENT TAC MEMBERS:

Gary Schaefer, Chairman
Jim Anderson, Vice Chair, LC Forest Preserve Dist.
Curt Cashman, Village of Round Lake Beach
Pete Manhard, Manhard Consulting
Al Giertych, LC Department of Transportation
Michael Talbett, JD, PhD
Jim Johnson, City of Highland Park

Tom Price, Conservation Design Forum
Dave Ziegler, Village of Gurnee
Jeff Mengler, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Vernon Swanson, Village of Deerfield
Jon Tack, LC Building & Zoning
Kurt Wandrey, Lakewood Homes, Inc.